Wreckage of Jet With 28 Aboard Sighted on Peak

By JOHN B. LENGEL

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — Wreckage of an airliner that hit a mountain peak in a storm last night was found this morning. Sheriff's deputies said all 28 persons aboard were dead.

The propjet Bonanza Airlines plane vanished during a snowstorm just before it was due to land on a flight from Phoenix.

Searchers spotted the wreckage shortly after dawn.

Helicopters flew to the scene and began flying bodies to a lower level.

The scene is about 16 miles southwest of Las Vegas near the railroad community of Arden.

The terrain is so rugged in that area that jeeps could not reach the scene.

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — A propject airliner with 28 persons aboard disappeared Sunday night in a desert snowstorm south of Las Vegas. An airline official said, "We must assume the plane is down."

A motorist told sheriff's officers he saw the twin-engine plane skimming the ground on a whirl of snow eight miles south of the city.

The Fairchild F27, Bonanza Airline's Flight 114 from Phoenix, Ariz., was three minutes from a landing at McCarran Field when it vanished from the radar screen at 8:27 p.m.

The plane was heading northeast, dropping down into the mountain-rimmed Las Vegas valley for an instrument landing.

Sheriff's officers said Bob Baker, a Las Vegas man, told them: "I was driving on Highway 91 between 8 and 8:30 p.m. when I saw a Bonanza plane, 70 to 100 feet off the ground, heading southeast. There were no landing lights on. One landing gear was down."

Baker's location was about where the plane was last sighted on radar but his sighting gave the plane a different direction: south instead of north.

Sheriff's jeeps and squad cars gathered on Highway 91 — the road between Los Angeles and Las Vegas — near the railroad-siding settlement of Arden, where Baker said he had seen the plane.

The season's first snow was falling heavily as the search was launched. Soon after the F27 disappeared McCarran Field was closed to traffic. Another Bonanza plane, Flight 104, landed north of the city at Nellis Air Force Base.

Six to eight inches of snow

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Wreckage of

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covered the open desert country near Arden, and higher drifts stalled many rescue-party cars.

The highway and the railroad run through the bottom of the 4,500-foot-high valley, which is within sight of the neon glow of the Las Vegas strip to the north. Most of the valley is open country where a plane could possibly survive a forced landing.

Not many miles away on the east and west are mountains. On the west, in the Clark Mountains, slopes climb steeply to 8,504-foot Potosi Mountain. To the east foothills rise to 5,000-foot heights.

Bonaza officials hoped at first the plane might have been flown to another field after its pilot somehow lost radio communications. The plane carried enough fuel to keep it aloft until 11 p.m.

Soon after that Myron Reynolds, Bonanza's vice president in charge of operations, told newsmen: "The fuel point has been passed. We must assume the plane is down. We just don't know where."

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — An airliner carrying 28 persons disappeared in a snowstorm as it neared a landing at Las Vegas Sunday night, and an airline official said: "We must assume the plane is down."

The plane was a Bonanza Airlines propjet en route to Las Vegas' McCarran Field from Phoenix, Ariz. It carried a crew of 3 and 25 passengers.

The plane was due at 8:30 p.m. It carried enough fuel to keep it aloft until 11 p.m.

Soon after that time Myron Reynolds, vice president of operations for Bonanza, told newsmen at the line's office here: "The fuel point has been passed. We must assume the plane is down. We just don't know where."

The plane vanished from the McCarran Field radar screen at 824 p.m. while approximately eight miles sough of the city.

Thirty sheriff's units rushed to the area and hunted as light snow fell. It was the first snowfall of the season.

Sheriff's deputies reported that a power line was down near the Blue Diamond gypsum mine, in the area in which the plane was last reported. It may have been knocked down by the plane, they said.